tion of his spirit, that brings to them light. All the virgins had *lamps.*"

8 The number ten is symbolic of all the virgins, that is to say, all who at the time of the coming of the Lord Jesus to the temple were in line for the kingdom. The number five symbolically shows that the virgins were divided into two classes without reference to the number in each class. What Jesus was saying to his disciples, in fact, was in part an answer to their question concerning the end of the world, his coming, and the setting up of his kingdom. In that answer none would be considered except the ones who had agreed to do God's will, and who were once in line for the kingdom. The company that was foolish had marred their virginity by the foolish course taken by them. Their foolishness and its consequences is in harmony with the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the virgins or foolish ones there mentioned. "And the Highroad . . . , there shall not pass over it one who is unclean; . . . and the perverse [(*margin*) foolish] shall not stray thereinto." (Isa. 35:8, *Roth.*) The two classes of virgins also correspond to the two classes mentioned by the prophet Zechariah, to wit: "And half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people [the wise company] shall not be cut off from the city."–Zech. 14:2; see *Preparation,* pages 288, 289.

9 Confusion has resulted concerning this matter until the Lord was pleased to give to his people the clear and proper understanding of the great multitude, which, thanks be to Him, he has now done. Proceeding upon the theory for many years past that the great multitude is a spirit-begotten class which fails to reach the kingdom because of negligence and indifference, it was concluded that the 'foolish virgin' class was identical with the great multitude. Such conclusion, however, was incorrect. The great multitude was never in line for the royal house of God, because not spirit-begotten. For some time we understood the great multitude and the prisoner class to be one and the same. It is true that the great multitude are prisoners to Satan's organization before coming out and forming the great multitude, and it is also true that those in line for the kingdom were once prisoners, as heretofore stated in *The Watchtower.* The virgins, however, that become foolish are limited to those who were begotten of the spirit, and called to the kingdom, and who accepted the call and who were in that attitude at the time of the appearing of the Lord Jesus at the temple for judgment. (Mal. 3:2, 3) All the virgins were looking for the coming of Christ Jesus and the setting up of his kingdom, otherwise they never would have responded to the call for the kingdom.

10 All of these consecrated ones had received from the lamp-light, that is, the light of God's will as expressed in his Word, information concerning the kingdom, and those who had believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and had entered into a covenant to do the will of God, were then brought forth as his sons and called to the kingdom. Oil is a symbol of joy and gladness. (Heb. 3:6; Pss. 23:5; 45:7; 141:5) All the virgins went forth to welcome the Lord at his coming. "They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps."—Matt. 25:3, 4.

11 All of them had lamps, that is, some knowledge of his Word, and were thus equipped to serve him. Each one begotten and called as a spirit creature to the kingdom is a "vessel", and each one, in order to be pleasing to the Lord, must be a vessel of honor to the Lord. Some appeared to be vessels of honor, and some of dishonor. The Scriptures do not say vessels of honor and *less* honor, but do say 'vessels of honor and dishonor'. (2 Tim. 2:20, 21, *Roth.*) Surely this means that one class honor Jehovah, and the other class, by honoring self or other creatures, dishonor Jehovah God. "That ye should know, each one of you, how of his own vessel to possess himself in sanctification and honour." (1 Thess. 4:4, *Roth.*) Vessels of dishonor are marked by the Lord for destruction: "And if God, wishing to shew his anger and to make known his power, bare in much patience with vessels of anger already fitted for destruction." (Rom. 9:22, *Roth.*) Vessels of mercy are the ones upon whom God makes known the riches of his glory: "In order that he might make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy which he prepared beforehand for glory." (Rom. 9:23, *Roth.*) If a vessel is marked for destruction, surely it could not be classed as one of less honor, and which would receive a secondary reward in heaven. The vessels of honor make many mistakes because of imperfections, but God's mercy is extended toward them because their motive is right and they honestly endeavor to serve Jehovah in an unselfish manner.

12 The words of Christ Jesus employed in the parable do not say, nor are they to the effect, that the virgins took an extra supply of oil for their lamps, but he does say that the foolish "took no oil with them", which, oil being a symbol of joy and gladness resulting from loving devotion to Jehovah God and Christ Jesus, would mean that these foolish ones were selfish, did not have love for God and Christ Jesus, and were not such as have "the joy of the Lord". They were looking for the coming of Christ Jesus, not that Jehovah's name might be honored and glorified, but that they as creatures might be exalted to a high position. They were extremely selfish. There was no joy in their hearts, as indeed there cannot be in an extremely selfish heart. They were not looking for the King and the kingdom with joy, but that their selfish desires might be gratified. On the contrary, the Lord says concerning the wise virgins that they "took oil in their vessels with their lamps", that is to say, they had the joy of the Lord in them, and the joy of the Lord was their strength. They were unselfishly devoted to God and his kingdom at all times and